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No. LXXXVI

MINOR DRAMA

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# TO OBLIGE BENSON.

A COMEDIETTA, IN ONE ACT.

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY TOM TAYLOR.

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, STAGE BUSINESS, COSTUMES  
RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c., &c.

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**SCENE 6: CHARACTERS.—(TO JULIE BENSON.)**

	<i>Olympic London, 1854.</i>	<i>Wallacks, N.Y. 1856.</i>	<i>Broadway, N.Y.</i>
<i>Mr. Benson, (a barrister.)</i>	-		
<i>Mr. Trotter Southdown, (his friend.)</i>	-	Mr. Norton,	Mr. Whiting,
<i>Mr. John Meredith, (Benson's pupil.)</i>	-	F. Robson,	Davidge,
	-	Leslie,	Grosvenor.
<i>Mrs. Benson.</i>	-		
<i>Mrs. Trotter Southdown.</i>	-	Miss Wyndham,	Miss A. Gougenheim,
	-	Mrs. Stirling.	J. Gougenheim.
	<i>Walnut-st. Philad., 1855</i>	<i>Boston Museum, 1856</i>	<i>London, C. W.</i>
<i>Mr. Benson, (a barrister.)</i>	-	Mr. Joyce,	Mr. Fardon,
<i>Mr. Trotter Southdown, (his friend.)</i>	-	Chapman,	W. Davidge,
<i>Mr. John Meredith, (Benson's pupil.)</i>	-	Eytunge,	Rogers,
	-		
<i>Mrs. Benson.</i>	-	Mrs. Clarke.	Miss Stanley,
<i>Mrs. Trotter Southdown.</i>	-	Mrs. Weston	Mrs. Brunton.

**Costumes.**—(TO OBLIGE BENSON.)

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MR. BENSON.—Frock-coat, buff waistcoat, and grey trowsers.

MR. TROTTER SOUTHDOWN.—Shooting or fishing coat, waistcoat, and trowsers, all of small black and white plaid, drab cloth boots, drab hat.

MR. MEREDITH.—Dark frock coat, fancy drab waistcoat, and trowsers, black hat.

MRS. BENSON.—Handsome morning dress, silk apron.

MRS. SOUTHDOWN.—Morning Walking dress, fashionable bonnet, china crape shawl.

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**STAGE DIRECTIONS**

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**EXITS AND ENTRANCES**

L. means *First Entrance, Left*. R. *First Entrance, Right*. S. E. L. *Second Entrance, Left*. S. E. R. *Second Entrance, Right*. U. E. L. *Upper Entrance, Left*. U. E. R. *Upper Entrance, Right*. C. Centre. L. C. *Left of Centre*. R. C. *Right of Centre*. T. E. L. *Third Entrance, Left*. T. E. R. *Third Entrance, Right*. C. D. *Centre Door*. D. R. *Door Right*. D. L. *Door Left*. U. D. L. *Upper Door, Left*. U. D. R. *Upper Door, Right*.

\*\* The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

## TO OBLIGE BENSON.

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**SET 1.** —A Drawing-room—Door in flat, c., backed by another chamber. Door, **R. 2 E.** Windows (practicable) with curtains, **R. 3 E.** Door, **1 3 E.** Practicable fire-place, with fire, fender, fire-irons, hearth-rug, &c. **L. 2 E.** Chimney-piece, with glass, china ornaments, vases, and French clock. Round table, **R. H.**, with books, knick-knacks, blotting book, 3 sheets of letter paper, 3 pens, and ink. Chair near table. Chairs about stage. Table at back, (against flat) **L. H.** A chair (to break) near it. Easy chair by fire-place; carpet down: an ottoman in c. of stage.

*Enter MEREDITH, L. C.*

*Meredith.* Not here! I am sorry for that—no, I am not—I'm glad, it will give me time to collect myself before I face her. I am overwhelmed with anxiety until I know the result of my letter. She can't be offended at it—yet, if she should, the consequences may be awful. It's wrong!—of course, I know it's wrong. I didn't pay Benson a hundred guineas for leave to fall in love with his wife—his adorable wife—whom her parchment-faced husband leaves all day by herself, while he's rummaging Reports in Chambers, or retailing them in the Queen's Bench. To see an angel like that neglected in this way is enough of itself to set an inflammable fellow in a blaze—and I *am* inflammable—I glory in it. She certainly is not annoyed at my attentions, or she'd never have written me this dear letter, [*Takes it out*] the answer to which I slipped into her glove so cleverly at the pic-nic in Bushey Park yesterday. I shall hear what she says to it this morning. Of course I was bound to call to inquire whether she hasn't caught any cold [*Looks off at door, L. 3 E.*] Eh!—here she comes!—no, confound it! it's Benson!

*Enter BENSON, L. D. 3 E.*

*Benson.* Ah! Meredith, my boy! What good wind blows you here, all the way from the Temple? [*Goes to R. of fire-place.*]

*Mer.* Eh? I—I—saw my uncle yesterday [*L. of fire-place.*]

*Ben.* What! the Captain!—old Trueblue, eh?

*Mer.* Yes; and he will be delighted to let you have his cottage at



Ventnor for the long vacation.

*Ben.* Capital!—and the figure?

*Mer.* What you offered—fifty guineas for the three months.

*Ben.* Bravo!—Carry will be delighted with Ventnor—the cottage is delightfully situate, isn't it?

*Mer.* Delightfully. You can catch your own lobsters out of the dining-room windows.

*Ben.* I don't know that that will be any recommendation—to her, I mean. But, remember, not a hint to Mrs. Benson that I pay for the place—she fancies it a delicate attention of yours—and she's so afraid of our spending too much money.

*Mer.* You may depend on my keeping the secret.

*Ben.* And what are you going to do with yourself this long vacation?

*Mer.* I hardly know. I shall probably be in the Isle of Wight part of the time.

*Ben.* Look us up, look us up. Carry will be delighted to see you—you're a bit of a favorite with Carry, I can tell you.

*Mer.* [*Aside.*] I hope so.

*Ben.* Here she is! [*Crosses to R.*] Not a word of the money for the cottage.

*Enter MRS. BENSON, R. D. 2 E.*

*Mrs. B.* Good morning, Mr. Meredith! (*R.*)

*Mer. (L.)* Good morning! I hope you caught no cold at Bushey yesterday!

*Mrs. B.* Oh, no! What a charming day we had!—I enjoyed it so much.

*Mer.* [*Aside.*] Bravo!—she's not offended. I never had a more delightful afternoon.

*Mrs. B.* Yes—the chestnuts were lovely.

*Mer.* I didn't look at them.

[*Significantly.*]

*Mrs. B.* Indeed!

*Ben.* Ah! Meredith's like me—no taste for green trees and white blossoms. Law calf's the color—eh, Meredith? But what do you think, Carry? Here's Meredith offers us that pretty cottage of the captain's—his uncle's, you know—at Ventnor, for the long vacation.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, how very kind of Mr. Meredith! Such a lovely spot!

*Ben.* And not content with that, he's brought you a box for the Opera to-morrow night.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, Mr. Meredith!

*Ben.* [*Aside to MRS. BENSON.*] You twig! Take one at Mitchell's Hush! [*Passes his purse to him slyly*]

*Mrs. B.* But, my dear, we are trespassing on Mr. Meredith's kindness.

*Ben.* Not a bit of it. He knows you adore the Opera, and he can always get boxes given him. Can't you, Meredith?

*Mer.* Oh, yes. I've some friends connected with the press. It's only asking them.

*Mrs. Southdown.* [*Without a c.*] In the drawing-room! Oh, well

*Ben* It's Mrs. Southdown Carry.

*Enter* MRS. SOUTHDOWN, C. D., MEREDITH *retires up to fire-place.*

Ah! Mrs. Southdown!

*Mrs. S.* [c.] Good morning, Mr. Benson, (*shaking hands with him, c., he goes up, c., and comes down again, R. H.*) Well, Carry!

[*Kissing Mrs B*

*Mrs. B.* How well you are looking, dear.

*Mrs. S.* I've come to restore stolen goods, Carry. Only think, I carried off your gloves from Bushey, yesterday; picked 'em off the grass when you went for a stroll, and put 'em on instead of my own. Here they are.

[*Gives gloves.*

*Mer.* She had her gloves!

*Mrs. B.* Thank you. I couldn't imagine what had become of them. And you enjoyed your pic-nic?

*Mrs. S.* Oh, enormously! [*Sees MEREDITH, aside.*] There he is But only conceive, Carry I made a conquest.

*Ben.* 'Gad, I don't wonder at it.

*Mrs. B.* A conquest, dear?

*Mrs. S.* "Veni, vidi, vici!" That's right, isn't it, Mr. Benson?

*Ben.* Quite. It was a letter of Cæsar's to the Senate. It means, "I came, I saw, I conquered."

*Mrs. S.* Only think, dear, of my getting a regular declaration—popped so neatly—the gentleman thought I was a widow, I suppose.

*Mrs. B.* But who was it? Do tell me.

*Mrs. S.* Oh no, that wouldn't be fair. I hardly know him; and I don't want to make the poor man ridiculous.

*Mer.* [*Aside.*] A pretty mess I've made of it.

*Mrs. S.* You never read anything like his letter [*Pretends to see MEREDITH.*]—Ah, Mr. Meredith, good morning! I didn't see you.—It was the silliest namby-pamby stuff—

*Ben.* Ah! so they always are, these love-letters. I've had lots through my hands in actions for breach. They always amuse the jury amazingly.

*Mrs. B.* But Mr. Southdown was there. If he had seen you receive such a letter—

*Mrs. S.* Oh. Trotter was asleep, under the horse-chestnuts. He always goes to sleep after dinner, you know.

*Ben.* What a capital idea! Southdown peaceably snoring while his wife was receiving a billet-doux. Isn't it a good notion, Meredith? Ha! ha! ha!

*Mrs. B.* I don't see anything to laugh at, Mr. Benson.

*Ben.* And where is Southdown this morning? Snoring still, I suppose

*Mrs. S.* He? Oh dear, no. He was off by eight o'clock this morning to his model farm, at Willesden.

*Ben.* Farm! Now how a sensible man of business, like Southdown, can take any pleasure in farming!—

*Mrs. S.* Oh, it's his passion. We all have our passions, you know



**Mr. Meredith** Always some little pet wickedness. Lucky where they're nothing worse than absurd.

**Mer.** [*Aside.*] Confound it! she's quizzing me.

**Mrs. S.** He is to grow turnips as big as balloons, and feed oxen so fat they can't walk, and raise mangoldwurzel upon deal tables; and, in short, to make his fortune in the most wonderful way,—in the long run. Only it's very expensive—in the meanwhile.

**Ben.** Throwing his money away, and neglecting his wife for such humbug as that! I have no patience with him! I say, Meredith, I wish you would just come into my study—I've had the papers in Griggs and Griffin up from chambers. There's the prettiest point I want to show you. [*Going up to door, R. 2 R.*]

**Mer.** Very well. [*Aside to Mrs. S., as he crosses behind to R. II.*] I must have five minutes conversation with you, ma'am.

**Mrs. S.** [*Aside to him.*] With all my heart.

**Ben.** [*To Mrs. S.*] I shall find you here in a quarter of an hour!

**Mrs. S.** Yes. I've come to spend the morning with Carry.

**Ben.** Come along, Meredith. We shall put Griggs out of court. He's made the most tremendous blunder in his declaration.

[*Exit, BENSON, R. D. 2 R.*]

**Mer.** [*Aside.*] Confound it! So have I!

[*Exit, MEREDITH, R. D. 2 R.*]

**Mrs. B.** [*Sitting down, R.*] Well dear, here we are, nice and cosey. What shall we do?

**Mrs. S.** [*Sitting down, c.*] Talk seriously.

**Mrs. B.** Very well. Were you at the Opera on Tuesday?

**Mrs. S.** Never mind the Opera. Let's talk about the pic-nic.

**Mrs. B.** And your love-letter, eh? Well, now, who was it? Let me guess. Was it a friend of Mr. Meredith's?

**Mrs. S.** It was Mr. Meredith himself.

**Mrs. B.** Mr. Meredith?

**Mrs. S.** Yes, he slipped the letter into my glove—that is to say, into your glove, which I took by mistake.

**Mrs. B.** No! How very droll!

**Mrs. S.** Droll! You seem amused, Carry. That letter was intended for you, and from the language of it, it is clear that you have already written to him.

**Mrs. B.** Oh, well, suppose I had.

**Mrs. S.** Suppose you had! My dear Carry, do you know you've done a very imprudent thing?

**Mrs. B.** But, Lucy, he was so very unhappy.

**Mrs. S.** Well.

**Mrs. B.** And then I assure you, I've never given him the least encouragement.

**Mrs. S.** You don't call that letter encouragement, I suppose!

**Mrs. B.** Well, but you know Benson's all day long in chambers, or in court, and one gets so moped. And Mr. Meredith is so attentive—always calling and sending one bouquets and prints and getting autographs for one's album, and giving one Opera Boxes.

*Mrs. S.* And what does that all amount to, that you should run the risk of making an excellent husband, like yours, unhappy.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, yes, I admit there never was a worthier man, or a kinder creature than Benson.

*Mrs. S.* My dear Carry, I hate preaching, and I don't think it ever does any good. But really you are wrong to trifle in a matter of this sort. [*Mrs. B. is about to speak.*] I know—you've only committed an indiscretion, but indiscretions may easily grow into crimes, and—

*Mrs. B.* Oh, Lucy, you alarm me. I'll never do anything so foolish again. But what ought I to do, dear?

*Mrs. S.* First of all, you mustn't write any more letters to Mr. Meredith.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, never!

*Mrs. S.* And then you must get back the one you have written.

*Mrs. B.* But how?

*Mrs. S.* I'll undertake to recover it. I'm to see him here directly. You had better go.

*Mrs. B.* [*Crosses to L.*] Oh, I'm so much obliged to you, you can't think. I had no notion I was acting so foolishly. But I assure you I've not given him the least encouragement.

*Mrs. S.* Now, pray don't say that again, Carry.

*Mrs. B.* I won't, then. I'll go to my own room directly, and if ever I do such a thing again, dear, it would serve me right to tell Mr. Benson. [*Exit Mrs. Benson, L. D. 3 E.*]

*Mrs. S.* It's lucky Benson is so blind to everything but his points of law, or there might have been mischief here already. Ah! here comes the inamorato—so now to get back the letter.

*Enter MEREDITH, R. D. 2 E.*

*Mer. (R.)* I trust, Mrs. Southdown, you will not betray the secret which you have discovered by a mistake.

*Mrs. S. (L.)* I've a very good mind, sir, to betray it, except on one condition—that you give up your most unbecoming attentions to Mrs. Benson.

*Mer.* Ask anything but that, ma'am.

*Mrs. S.* I shall not ask anything but that, sir. Unless you will give me this promise—

*Mer.* But Mrs. Southdown—

*Mrs. S.* I will listen to no special pleading, sir. I am mistress of your secret, and it is for me to dictate the conditions on which I will consent to keep it.

*Mer. [Aside.]* She's as obstinate as one of her husband's own pigs. Well, madam, what are your conditions?

*Mrs. S.* You will immediately leave London.

*Mer.* Agreed.

*Mrs. S.* You will not come within a hundred miles of the Beasons all this summer.

*Mer. [Aside.]* Confound it! Well!

*Mrs. S.* And before going you will give up to me the letter you have

received from Mrs. Benson—at once—or I'll tell Mr. Benson **every-**thing.

*Mer.* Good heavens! Mrs. Southdown.

*Mrs. S.* The letter—

*South.* [*Without L. C.*] Hollo, Toody! Where are **you**?

*Mer.* Hush!

*Mrs. S.* It's only my husband, never mind him!

*Enter SOUTHDOWN, L. C.*

*South.* (*L.*) Oh! good morning, Toody.

*Mrs. S.* [*To MEREDITH.*] The letter, sir, at once.

*South.* Holloa! Toody won't even bid me good morning **this morning**—Eh? I said good morning, Toody.

*Mrs. S.* [*Carelessly.*] Good morning, Trotter, good morning.

*South.* What a duck it is! Ah, Meredith, I saw you at the pic-nic yesterday, my boy—didn't you pitch into the champagne, you rogue—and didn't you pay attention to the ladies?—Ah, you dog! Well, **and** how are you—hearty—eh?

*Mer.* Quite well, thank you, sir.

*Mrs. S.* The letter—I must and will have it.

*Mer.* I will give it back to Mrs. Benson. I hav'n't got it **here**.

*Mrs. S.* Go and fetch it.

*South.* What is he to go and fetch, Toody?

*Mrs. S.* Never you mind, Trotter.

*Mer.* But surely—

*Mrs. S.* Go at once, sir, or I will speak out.

*Mer.* Very well, ma'am, then speak out.

*Exit MEREDITH, angrily, and with determination, L. C.*

*Mrs. S.* [*Up c. looking after him astonished*] But, sir—

*South.* (*L.*) Eh! "Speak out!" What are you up to, you two? **What** is the secret between you and Meredith? He looked uncommonly **queer**, and you're looking flabbergasted.

*Mrs. S.* [*To herself, coming down, R. H.*] I hope things have not gone any further than Carry said, but this obstinate refusal to give up the letter, and her thoughtlessness—

*South.* Well, but I say, Toody, you don't ask after the early reds. Would you believe it? I found three with the blight on 'em already—I've brought one to show you.

*Mrs. S.* [*To herself.*] I begin to feel very anxious about them.

*South.* So do I. Now's the ticklish time—just as they are beginning to swell. Look! [*Takes a diseased potato from his pocket.*]

*Mrs. S.* Their eyes must be opened.

*South.* [*Staring at her.*] Eh? my potatoes' eyes opened!

*Mrs. S.* Oh, bother your potatoes!

*South.* Bother my potatoes! On the contrary, my potatoes **bother** me.

*Mrs. S.* Eh! yes, I've a plan to prevent the mischief going any **far**ther.



*South.* No—have you though! Out with it! Mind, there's been trial and salt—they're no use. Is yours a new one?

*Mrs. S.* A new one indeed; but I wasn't thinking about potatoes Trotter.

*South.* Weren't you, though? My head's full of them—day and night.

*Mrs. S.* Now, Trotter, listen to me; you have a great regard for Benson, have you not?

*South.* Regard for Benson? Immerse regard—I'll do anything in the world to oblige him,—except cut farming.

*Mrs. S.* Then you have an excellent opportunity to oblige him now.

*South.* To oblige Benson! Does he want any money?

*Mrs. S.* Oh, no!

*South.* Well, what is it, then?

*Mrs. S.* You must leave the house. [*SOUTHDOWN goes up towards c. d.*] Where are you going?

*South.* To leave the house: didn't you tell me?

*Mrs. S.* Stop! you must leave the house, and then suddenly come in as if you'd not been here before—

*South.* Will that oblige Benson?

*Mrs. S.* Do wait till I've finished the sentence. But do not come in till you hear me say, "Good gracious, here's Trotter!"

*South.* Till I hear you say, "Good gracious, here's Trotter!" I don't understand.

*Mrs. S.* That's not of the least consequence. When you hear that, open the door, and shout out, "Where is she? I'm certain she's here!"

*South.* Who's here?

*Mrs. S.* Me! And you must begin storming at me in the most furious manner.

*South.* Storming at you, Toody: what for?

*Mrs. S.* Because you're jealous of me.

*South.* Jealous! Stuff and nonsense! I'm not jealous.

*Mrs. S.* No, but you must pretend to be.

*South.* To oblige Benson?

*Mrs. S.* Exactly.

*South.* But, Toody, I don't think I know how to be jealous—I never was given to that sort of thing.

*Mrs. S.* Just imagine I had been flirting with somebody!

*South.* Bless you, I couldn't imagine such a thing if I tried.

*Mrs. S.* Well, but only suppose I had!

*South.* Oh—well—if you had—[*Violently.*]

*Mrs. S.* What would you say?

*South* [*Mildly.*] Oh, I should say, "Toody likes it; so it's all right."

*Mrs. S.* Then you don't care for me, Trotter?

*South.* Not care for my Toody?

*Mrs. S.* If you do, pray do what I ask you; besides, I've told you already it's to oblige—

*South.* Benson! Well, Toody, I'll try.

*Mr. S.* That's a dear old boy. Now go out at once and come in and make a lunatic.

*Mr. S.* Like a lunatic, eh?

*Mr. S.* Yes.

*Mr. S.* Ve'y well, Toody, I'll try; but how the deuce can that oblige Benson?

*Mr. S.* Now do go, Trotter, and don't ask questions—you know I'm always right.

*Mr. S.* Of course Toody. [*Aside.*] I've not the least notion what the means—but she's such a superior woman.

[*Exit SOUTHDOWN, C. D. L.*]

*Mrs. S.* Yes, it's a capital plan; and if poor Trotter isn't too stupid—

*Enter MRS. BENSON, L. D. 3 E.*

*Mrs. B.* [*L.*] Well, Lucy, have you succeeded?

*Mrs. S.* [*R.*] My dear Carry, Meredith refuses to give back the letter.

*Mrs. B.* Then let him keep it, poor fellow!

*Mrs. S.* Let him keep it!

*Mrs. B.* After all, what *can* it signify?

*Mrs. S.* My poor dear Carry, if you knew as I do the dreadful consequences of even the slightest flirtation on the part of a married woman—

*Mrs. B.* You—you, dear steady old Lucy—what do you know about flirtation?

*Mrs. S.* Ahem! Now for it. [*Aside.*] Shall I confess to you, my dear, that I have been imprudent enough to accept what I thought harmless attentions from a gentleman—not Trotter—and even to write to him?

*Mrs. B.* You don't say so!

*Mrs. S.* I said at first as you do. "What *can* it signify?" "It's only to amuse myself." "And then Trotter don't know what jealousy is." And so I fancied, till one day he found it out.

*Mrs. B.* Good gracious!

*Mrs. S.* And ever since he's been a perfect brute—a tiger!

*Mrs. B.* Mr. Southdown a tiger!

*Mrs. S.* Oh, in society he restrains himself; but at home—you haven't an idea—it's fearful—not a moment's peace—suspicions—allusions—quarrels—threats—violence!

*Mrs. B.* Oh, Lucy, how dreadful!

*Mrs. S.* Why, at the pic-nic yesterday, when he was lying under the chesnuts, he wasn't asleep, my dear; oh, no, bless you, he had his eye on me all the time. I'm almost afraid he saw me take that letter out of your glove. And ever since, it's perfectly awful the way he has been in. This morning he said he was going to the farm at Willesden; but it's quite possible it was only a trick to throw me off my guard. I dare say he was hiding in the mews round the corner to watch who called, or to see if I went out, and to follow me. [*Noise of footsteps heard without, L. C.*] Eh! that step! Oh!

*Mrs. B.* What's the matter?

*Mrs. S.* Good gracious ! here's Trotter !

*Mrs. B.* [*Goes up to c. d., and looks off L.*] Yes, he's in the hall !

*South* [*Without, L. c.*] Don't tell me ! Stuff ! Humbug ! [*Roaring.*]

*Mrs. S.* For Heaven's sake, Carry, say you've not left me an instant !

*Mrs. B.* Don't be frightened—I'll say anything.

*South.* [*Without.*] Don't tell me !—she is here—I know she's here !

*Mrs. B.* How dreadful ! He's frantic ! [*Gets down to L. corner.*]

*Enter SOUTHDOWN, L. c.*

*South.* [*Comes down R.*] I must see her—I will see her—I insist on seeing her—I shall proceed to violence if I don't see her—so—

*Mrs. S.* [*c.*] Oh, sir, not before Mrs. Benson.

*South.* [*Aside, and stopping short in his violence.*] I mustn't mustn't I ?

*Mrs. S.* [*Aside to him.*] Of course you must.

*South.* So, Mrs. Trotter Southdown—so, madam—

*Mrs. B.* [*L., soothingly.*] But, Mr. Southdown—

*South.* [*Crossing to c. very politely and quietly*] How do you do, Mrs. Benson ?

*Mrs. S.* [*Aside to him.*] Be in a rage. [*R.*]

*South.* [*c.*] I'm in a rage, ma'am—a towering rage—a tremendous rage !

*Mrs. S.* [*R., aside to him.*] Capital !

*South.* I say, I'm in a tremendous rage ; because, of course—[*Aside*]  
—what the deuce am I in a tremendous rage for ?

*Mrs. B.* I assure you, Mrs. Southdown and I have been sitting quietly here by ourselves. [*L.*]

*Mrs. S.* Oh, he will not believe what you say ! [*Aside to him.*] Say you don't believe her.

*South.* No, madam, no ; stuff and nonsense, madam ; I don't believe you !

*Mrs. S.* [*Crying.*] Oh, I'm an unhappy woman ! To expose me thus before my friend !—to exhibit your insane jealousy ! Oh, you'll break my heart !

*South.* [*Goes to her*] Eh ! break your heart, Toody ? Come ! [*She pinches him.*] Oh ! [*Resuming his violence.*] I don't care, Mrs. Trotter Southdown—break away !

*Mrs. B.* [*L.*] This violence from you, Mr. Southdown, whom I always thought the mildest of men—

*South.* Well, I am the mild—

*Mrs. S.* [*Aside to him.*] Be a brute.

*South.* Mild ! I am mild, naturally—no, I am not—that is, I don't know what I am—on the contrary ; because, of course—in short, there are circumstances—[*Aside*]  
—What the deuce ought I to say ?

*Mrs. S.* [*Seated on ottoman c. Aside to him.*] Stride about the room.

*South.* [*L. c. Aside to her.*] Eh, stride ! Yes, I can't stand quiet my agitation forces me to stride about the room—in this style, madam. [*Walks about in long strides Then aside to Mrs. S., stopping, L. c.*]  
Will that do, Toody ?



*Mrs. S. [Aside.]* Capital! Go on. Sir, you are a brute! a tyrant!  
*[Aside to him.]* Tear your hair. *[c.]*

*South. [Aside to her, L. c.]* To oblige Benson?

*Mrs. S. [Aside.]* Of course!

*South.* It's enough to make a man tear his hair out by the roots  
*[He seizes his hair and pretends to tear it.]*

*Mrs. B. [L.]* But, Mr. Southdown—

*Mrs. S. [Aside to him.]* Capital! Now, throw the furniture about and go.

*South. [Aside.]* To oblige Benson? *[Aloud.]* But I will restrain myself no longer—there!

*[Begins to fling furniture about in pretended rage, but putting it gently down again; flings a chair against door R. 2 E., which hits BENSON, who enters at the moment.]*

*Mrs. S.* To use me thus,—before my friends, too! Oh, this brutal treatment is not to be borne!

*[Exit MRS. SOUTHDOWN L. D. 3 E. SOUTHDOWN rushes up c.]*

*Ben. [R., rubbing his shins.]* Confound it, Trotter! Trotter Southdown! I say, Trotter!

*South.* Don't tell me—I want air, air—quantities of air! *[Going c.]*  
 Well, this is the oddest way of obliging Benson!

*[Exit SOUTHDOWN, L. C.]*

*Ben. [Crosses to L.]* What on earth is the meaning of all this?

*Mrs. B. (R.)* Was ever anything like his violence? Good gracious to think of Mr. Southdown being jealous of his wife.

*Ben.* I never should think of such a thing.

*Mrs. B.* He is, though.

*Ben.* But what's his reason?

*Mrs. B.* It appears she has had the indiscretion to write to a gentleman—a young gentleman—

*Ben.* Ah! that was imprudent—it would make a strong impression on a jury.

*Mrs. B.* Of course, there was nothing wrong—Lucy assures me there wasn't.

*Ben.* Oh! of course not; but Southdown found it out, eh?

*Mrs. B.* Yes; and then it appears he must have seen Mr. Meredith give his wife a letter at the picnic yesterday.

*Ben.* Meredith! so it's he that's been playing the fool, is it? Now, why will Southdown allow his wife to go to such parties? A young woman like her! I can quite understand his agitation now—quite Poor Southdown!

*Mrs. B.* Oh! but after all, no reasonable man would get into such a passion for such a trifle as that. I am sure you wouldn't—would you, dear?

*Ben.* Eh, hum! I don't know. One can't answer for the consequences in such cases. As I told the jury in Bloggs and Burster, only last week—"When the temple of the domestic affections is violated, what matters the size of the breach or the plunder that rewards the sacrilegious intruder? That holy seal of confidence which cements the marriage bond is broken—the shrine of the household god has been

outraged; and who can wonder if the poor worshipper in that deserted fane, forgetting himself, should have thrashed the defendant within an inch of his life!"

*Mrs. B.* Beautiful!

*Ben.* But, of course, with a prudent, steady little duck of a wife like you, Carry, [*Kissing her,*] there's no fear of such indiscretion. No, no. However, we must get this affair settled without going to law. You go to Mrs. Southdown, and comfort her; and I'll reason with Southdown.

[*Going up L. H.*]

*Mrs. B.* Oh, do pacify him!

[*Going up, and crossing to L. H.*]

*Ben.* I'll try. [*Looking out window. R. 3 E.*] There he is, walking up and down in front of the house, mopping his forehead, and trying to curb his indignation, poor fellow! [*Calls from window*] Here, Southdown!—I say!—holloa! come up, there's a good fellow!—I want to speak to you.

*Mrs. B.* [*Up L.*] Does he still look excited?

*Ben. (R.)* No—he appears mild—quite mild. The open air has a wonderfully soothing effect in these cases. But go, Carry, and comfort Mrs. Southdown.

*Mrs. B.* I'll go at once. Now do impress upon him, my dear, that there's no harm in what she's done—that she wrote the letter without meaning anything—just as anybody might—just as I might. [*Aside.*] Oh, dear!—if he found out I had! [*Exit MRS. BENSON, L. D. 3 E.*]

*Enter SOUTHDOWN, L. C.* He looks round room, and comes down L. H.

*South. (L.)* Toody not here!

*Ben. (R.)* Now, Trotter, you really must restrain your feelings.—Come! you're more reasonable now, aren't you?

*South.* Eh? [*Aside.*] What a bore Toody's not here to tell me if I ought to go on being crazy, or not!

*Ben.* Come, don't sulk, Trotter. Promise me you'll be more master of yourself in future.

*South.* I'll try. [*Aside.*] I mustn't tell him it was to oblige him [*Aloud.*] I say, Benson, I hope I didn't hurt you with that chair?

*Ben.* Don't mention it. But I say, my dear fellow, you really ought not to give way in this style. Remember, if Mrs. Southdown has been a little indiscreet, after all, you are most to blame.

*South.* Eh! what? [*Aside.*] Mrs. S. indiscreet! What does he mean? [*Aloud.*] Do you think so?

*Ben.* Yes—what can you expect if you neglect a woman as you do, for that humbugging farm of yours; cultivating Swede turnips, and mangel wurzel, instead of the domestic affections. A woman naturally feels piqued, and accepts attentions from others.

*South.* Attentions! [*Aside.*] Toody accept attentions! What is he talking about?

*Ben.* And, though appearances are against her, I'll undertake to satisfy any jury there was nothing in her conduct at the pic-nic yesterday, beyond a little indiscretion.

*South.* Her conduct at the pic-nic! Indiscretion!

*Ben.* Even that letter she received——

*South.* Letter!—Toody receive a letter?

*Ben.* Oh, my wife told me everything—she's in your wife's secret

*South.* My wife's secret!—then my wife's got a secret?

*Ben.* I can answer for it that Meredith meant no harm, either, in writing to her.

*South.* [*Aside.*] Meredith write to my wife!—indiscretion!—receive attentions! Then it was he—ah! a light breaks in on me. Their conversation this morning when I came upon them unawares—his agitation—her abstraction! Oh, the duplicity of woman! It was to blind me—to hoodwink me—she persuaded me to get into a passion and behave as I did—storming and striding, and flinging chairs about—she said it was to oblige you.

*Ben.* To oblige me!

*South.* Yes. But now, will you oblige me?

*Ben.* In any way in my power, Trotter.

*South.* Next time that fellow, Meredith, sets his foot in your house, you set your foot in his—that is—kick him out, will you?

*Ben.* Kick him out!

*South.* Yes, unless I'm here, and then I'll give you the trouble.

*Enter MEREDITH, L. C.*

*Mer.* [*At back, R. H.*] I've brought the letter. I must give it back or she'll betray me. Ah, Benson and Southdown here!

*Ben.* [*To SOUTH.*] Now just let me give you a piece of friendly advice.

*South.* Advice! I know what you are going to say—bring an action against him.

*Ben.* An action? Certainly, of course.

*Mer.* An action! She's betrayed me, then. [*Retires up listening*

*South.* Yes, and you shall lead for me; or, I tell you what, better still, I'll challenge him, and you shall carry the challenge. The scoundrel!

*Ben.* But duelling is illegal, my dear fellow. Good gracious! suppose you shot him!

*South.* I dwell upon the idea with pleasure.

*Ben.* But then you'd be guilty of murder, and I should be an accessory before the fact.

*South.* I'll have revenge in one or other; by the law or against it—an action or a duel—damages or death!

*Mer.* I'd better get it over at once.

[*Coming forward, R. H.*

*Ben.* [*C., holding SOUTHDOWN back.*] Now, my dear Trotter, be calm.

*South.* Calm! Tell the ocean to be calm between Folkestone and Boulogne. There he is! Let me get at him!

*Ben.* You're in my hands. Sit down. This is my affair.

[*BENSON forces SOUTHDOWN up the stage into chair, R. of S. place*

*Mer.* [*Aside.*] As I feared; it's all over.

*South.* [*In chair, to BENSON.*] Mind, swords or pistols, rifles or revolvers—anything he likes, it's all one to me.

*Ben.* [*To MEREDITH.*] So, sir, you're here! Rash young man! If any scandalous intrigues are discovered! The most dreadful consequences



are to be apprehended unless you promise to leave London this very day.

*Mer.* But, sir——

*Ben.* No explanations. Your conscience ought to tell you if they can improve matters.

*Mer.* [*Aside.*] Very well, sir, I promise to leave London.

*Ben.* There, thank goodness, that's settled.

*South.* [*Jumping up.*] Settled! You call that settling? I'll show you what settling is! [*Crosses to R. c.*] Find a friend, sir We shall be happy to see you with him at Wormwood Scrubs, with any weapons, provided they are deadly ones, to-morrow morning at six, or earlier, if you like.

*Mer.* A challenge!

*South.* I flatter myself it is; and none of your humbugging affairs, mere bouncers to frighten the cock-pheasants, and to publish in the newspapers. No, sir; a challenge, sir; to be followed by blood, sir, real blood!

[*Crosses to R., and leans on back of chair.*]

*Mer.* [*Goes up, c.*] Mr. Benson, your friend is too excited at present to make any arrangements; but I shall be in my chambers all the afternoon, and any communication I may receive I will refer to a friend, in the style understood among gentlemen.

[*Exit MEREDITH, L. c*]

*Ben.* (L.) But, Southdown, do reflect coolly.

*South.* [R.] Reflect coolly? Now I ask you as a friend, Benson, am I in a state to reflect coolly? I'm wet through with emotion. Coolly, indeed!

[*Goes up R. H.*]

*Enter MRS. BENSON and MRS. SOUTHDOWN, L. D. 3 E.*

*Ben.* [R., seeing MRS. S.] Oh, by Jove! here's his wife!

*Mrs. B.* [L. c., aside to MRS. S.] Don't be alarmed; he's quite calm now—Benson told me so. [*To SOUTHDOWN.*] Mr. Southdown, here's Lucy.

*South.* [R. c.] Eh, my wife! Take her away. I won't see her. Put her somewhere!

*Mrs. S.* [*Crossing to c. to him.*] Trotter!

*South.* Don't speak to me, crocodile!

*Mrs. S.* [*Aside.*] Capital! Keep it up!

*South.* Keep it up! I don't want you to tell me to keep it up, I can tell you, Rattlesnake!

*Ben.* But, Trotter——

*South.* You be hanged!

*Mrs. B.* [*Crossing to SOUTHDOWN.*] But, Mr. Southdown——

*South.* You be——[*MRS. BENSON goes up a little, c., and down again, L. H.*] That is—I—I beg your pardon; but I'm mad, Mrs. Benson—stark, staring mad! So Mrs. Southdown, you think to throw dust in my eyes, do you? I am a good, stupid, easy-going man—am I? But you are mistaken, madam; you don't know the demon that is generally chained up under this mild exterior. He's loose now, Basilisk!

*Mrs. S.* [c., aside.] Excellent! He's improved wonderfully in his acting.

*South.* I've found out the wretch, madam—the destroyer of my peace

of mind—the bomb-shell that has burst in my house, and blown my domestic felicity to immortal smash!

Mrs. S. [*Aside.*] I declare he's inimitable! [*Aloud.*] Oh, mercy mercy!

South. I've challenged him, madam; and at six o'clock to-morrow at Wormwood Scrubbs—

Mrs. S. [*Aside.*] Better and better! [*Aloud.*] You will murder him

South. I flatter myself I will, in the most cold-blooded manner.

Mrs. S. [*Falling on her knees.*] Oh, spare me, sir—spare him!

South. You hear the Cobra de Capella; she asks me to spare him! Do you hear, Benson? Oh, I shall go crazy!

Ben. But, Trotter!

South. Don't come near me. [*Crosses to R.*] I may bite—I can't answer for it I shall not bite!

Mrs. S. [*Aside.*] How well he does it!

South. Let me go! [*Crosses to c.*] I want air—I want room—don't attempt to hold me! [*He walks about, overturning the furniture.*] Let the hurricane rage on!

Ben. [*R.*] Oh, this will never do! Trotter! Trotter Southdown! you're damaging the furniture.

South. [*Up stage, L. c.*] It relieves my mind to smash things!

[*Breaks chair.*  
Mrs. S. [*Aside.*] He's overdoing it. [*Aside to him.*] Trotter, stop; that will do; you're going too far.

South. [*Down, L. H.*] Ah! going too far! On the contrary, I've not gone far enough—there! [*Breaks a vase on mantel piece.*

Mrs. B. [*R. c.*] Oh, sir!

Ben. [*R.*] Carry's favorite vase!

Mrs. S. [*L. c., aside to SOUTHDOWN.*] Remember, this isn't your house.

South. All the better! [*He smashes another vase.*] There!

Ben. But, Mr. Southdown, this wanton destruction!

Mrs. B. It is too bad!

Mrs. S. [*Aside.*] I must put a stop to this. Oh, mercy, mercy! I'm dying! [*Sinks on ottoman, c.*

Mrs. B. [*Running to her, L. of ottoman.*] She has fainted! Oh, Lucy, Lucy!

[*SOUTHDOWN throws himself, quite exhausted, into arm-chair, L.*

Ben. [*R. of ottoman.*] Here's a pretty state you've thrown your wife into!

South. [*In chair, L.*] Here's a pretty state she's thrown me into!

Mrs. B. Lucy! Oh, she's recovering!

Mrs. S. Air, air!

Ben. Take my arm, Mrs. Southdown. [*Going, leading Mrs. SOUTHDOWN up c. To Mrs. BENSON, who is following.*] Stay with him, or he may do himself a mischief.

[*Mrs. SOUTHDOWN goes towards c., leaning on BENSON's arm;*

*SOUTHDOWN sits sobbing in chair, L.*

Mrs. B. [*Coming down L. of SOUTHDOWN, looking at him.*] Poor man what dreadful agony!

*Mrs. S.* [*Aside, and looking back.*] How wonderfully well he does it  
[*Exit MRS. SOUTHDOWN, supported by BENSON, L. c.*]

*Mrs. B.* [*Approaching SOUTHDOWN, L.*] Come, Mr. Southdown, cheer up—Lucy may have been imprudent—

*South.* A woman I adored, madam! [*Rises, and comes forward, c.*] A woman I thought more of than my great ruta бага mangold wurzel, or my liquid manure tank—a woman I'd have given up high farming for if she had asked me.

*Mrs. B.* [*L.*] I'm sure she repents bitterly of her imprudence.

*South.* Repents! Suppose I'd been of an apoplectic habit of body—the shock would have been fatal, ma'm. However, there's the duel to come.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, you don't mean to say you'll fight?

*South.* Till one of us is brought home a mangled corse by the usual mode of conveyance—a shutter.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, sir, do not talk in this dreadful manner

[*She puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*]

*South.* You feel for me—I'm extremely obliged to you—oh, try to conceive what I suffer—"Imagine Benson in my predicament"—He's a happy man, if ever there was one—fond of you—working away from morning till night for your sake. Well, now, suppose a d——d good-natured friend was to come to him and say, "Your pupil, Mr. Meredith, is paying attentions to Mrs. Benson?"

*Mrs. B.* Oh, sir!

*South.* "Mrs. B. has written to him a letter."

*Mrs. B.* Mr. Southdown!

*South.* I say, only imagine such a thing—of course, you wouldn't be guilty of anything of the kind; but, suppose you had been, and Benson were to be told of it, suddenly—he's of a fuller habit of body than I am—it would be fatal to him.

*Mrs. B.* Oh, Mr. Southdown, how can you imagine such dreadful things? Now just reflect—

*South.* Reflect Reflect, indeed! I'm past the stage of reflection, madam.

[*He goes to table R. and sits, taking up blotting-book.*]

*Mrs. B.* What are you going to do now?

*South.* To write to Mrs. Southdown's family, to tell them what a wreck she's made of our once happy home. [*Writes.*] "My dear mother-in-law—" [*He smashes a pen, and takes another, and a fresh sheet of paper.*] No, I'll spare her mamma. "My dear father-in-law—" No, that is not heart-broken enough. [*Throws pen away, and writes with a fresh one on a fresh sheet of paper.*] "Wretched parent—" Yes, Eh! I've smashed all the pens and used up all the paper. Oh! in Benson's study I shall find the means of putting my emotions into black and white.

[*Exit SOUTHDOWN, R. D. 2 E.*]

*Mrs. B.* All this misery has been caused by a mere indiscretion—a letter! Good gracious! To think I might have caused as much suffering to poor dear Benson! Oh! it will be a lesson to me for life.



*Enter BENSON and MRS. SOUTHDOWN, 1. C*

Here he comes, and Lucy.

*Mrs. S. (L.)* Do not tell me, Sir. It's always the husband's fault.

*Ben. (c.)* But allow me—

*Mrs. S.* After you're once married you think you have a right to neglect us. Engrossed by your pleasures—your clubs—your public dinners—your white bait parties—you don't think about us moping at home—and, of course—

*Ben.* But, my dear Mrs. Southdown, that's what I'm always preaching to Trotter. "Now, look here, Southdown"—I've said to him a hundred times—"Your head's always running on turnips, and guano, and clod-crushers. You don't think how Mrs. S. is bored all the while mewed up by herself in Clarges-street, while you are drilling, and harrowing, and surface-soiling down at Willesden. Why don't you do as I do?"

*Mrs. S.* As you do?

*Ben.* Yes, ask Carry if I'm not the most attentive husband in the Temple. Why, when we were first married, there never was a night but I took her to a party, or to the play, or the Opera. It bored me dreadfully, but I did it from a stern sense of duty—didn't I, Carry?

*Mrs. B. (R.)* Yes, when we were first married.

*Ben.* And I should have gone on, only Carry got so economical—so afraid I was spending too much on her, that, egad, the only way I could manage, was to let Meredith take the boxes, and pretend they were given him.

*Mrs. B.* Then it was *you*.

*Ben.* Of course it was, I knew how you adored the Opera.

*Mrs. B.* And you never told me.

*Ben.* Why should I? To poison your pleasure? I only mention it now, because Meredith's going to leave town to-day.

*Mrs. B.* Oh! I hope we shall see him again before he goes, to thank him for the very handsome way in which he has offered us his uncle's cottage for the summer.

*Ben.* Oh never mind, considering I pay old Trueblue fifty pounds for the three months.

*Mrs. B.* You pay fifty pounds! Then, it's not a politeness of *his*, but an attention of *yours*, dear.

*Ben.* Of course it is! Do you think I value fifty pounds, when it's to give pleasure to my Carry?

*Mrs. B. [Aside.]* And I thought him careless—neglectful!

*Ben.* I merely mention these things to show Mrs. Southdown what I have always preached to Trotter. But he never would listen to me.

*Mrs. B.* Do you know [*Embracing BENSON, and getting to c.*] you're a dear, darling, attentive old hubby, and I love you very much.

*Ben.* Of course you do. I know that. [*Mrs B. appears affected.*] Why, what's the matter?

*Mrs. B.* Nothing, dear, only—when I think—if you only knew—

*Mrs. S. (L.) [Aside.]* The little fool! Hush! But where is my husband?

*Mrs. B.* He's gone to Mr. Benson's to write to your parents

*Mrs. S.* To my parents! [*Aside.*] The dear fellow! I never thought he was half so intelligent.

*Mrs. B.* He's more furious than ever.

*Mrs. S.* Oh, leave me to soothe him.

*Ben.* I'm afraid you'll find it difficult. I never saw a man in such a state as he was when I mentioned the letter you had written to Meredith.

*Mrs. S.* The letter I had written?

*Ben.* Yes. Carry let it out to me, and I let it out to him. That is, I mentioned it—

*Mrs. S.* You mentioned my writing a letter to Mr. Meredith?

*Ben.* Why, as he knew of it before. It was that first put him in such a frenzy—wasn't it?

*Mrs. S.* Ah! I see it all now. [*Aside.*] He's not making believe to be jealous! He is jealous in sober earnest.

*Ben.* [*Going up.*] I had better see him.

*Mrs. S.* No, no. I must explain matters alone. You'll make the matter twenty times worse.

*Ben.* Well, perhaps you're right. You women have a way of managing things. Come, Carry, let's leave the parties to settle the case out of court. It often answers when we lawyers can't do anything.

[*Exit MR. and MRS. BENSON, L. D. 3 E.*]

*Mrs. S.* Here he comes! I must open his eyes—poor, dear old stupid!

*Enter SOUTHDOWN, R. D. 2 E. An open letter in his hand.*

*South.* I think this will do. [*Reads.*] "Wretched old man!" It's perhaps not very polite to address one's father-in-law in that manner, but it paints the desolation of my mind, and will lead him to anticipate the misery that's in store for him. "Wretched old man! Your wife whom I have the misfortune to call my daughter"—

*Mrs. S.* (L) Pooh! pooh! Trotter! [*She takes the letter and crumples it up.*] If you must write to papa, don't write nonsense

*South* (R.) Eh! So Mrs. Southdown—

*Mrs. S.* [*Laughing.*] There, there! and to think of your being in earnest all the while. Ha! ha! ha!

*South.* So, madam, you're laughing! Oh! this is too hardened!

*Mrs. S.* Don't you see? It's all a farce.

*South.* A farce! say a tragedy, madam, with everybody killed in the last act!

*Mrs. S.* Stuff and nonsense—how stupid you are! Don't you understand? This flirtation—Mr. Meredith's letter—it wasn't to me!

*South.* Not to you, eh? not to you?

*Mrs. S.* No, of course not, but to Mrs. Benson. She was foolish enough to send that letter—the answer was for *her*, and I wanted *you* to act jealousy, only to frighten her out of such indiscretions for the future.

*South.* So, to frighten *her*, eh?

*Mrs. S.* Yes, by showing her to what lengths an angry husband can go: even such a kind soft-hearted, easy creature as you are.

*South.* Oh, no! really I call this coming it a leetle too strong, even for such a kind, soft-hearted, easy creature as I am! So, it's Mrs. Benson, is it?

*Mrs. S.* Hush! or Benson will hear you.

*South.* Mrs. Benson! oh, oh! this is too rich. Here, Benson. Benson!  
[Crosses to L. C.]

*Enter BENSON and MRS. BENSON, L. D. 3 E.*

*Ben.* (L. C.) Well, you've made it up!

*South.* (R. C.) Made it up, indeed! Only imagine the cock-and-bull story this abandoned female has invented to humbug me!

*Mrs. S.* (R.) Mr. Southdown, don't!

*South.* Don't! how dare you say "don't" to me! Only imagine Benson, she says, the real culprit—

*Mrs. S.* Silence. Mr. Southdown, this instant!

*South.* Silence yourself, audacious woman! She says the real culprit is Mrs. Benson.

*Mrs. B.* (L.) Oh, goodness gracious!

*South.* That it's Mrs. Benson that Meredith paid attentions to—that it was Mrs. Benson who wrote him a letter, and that the letter he gave her at the picnic yesterday was meant for Mrs. Benson.

*Mrs. B.* (L.) Oh, Lucy! how could you?

*Mrs. S.* [Aside to Mrs. B. behind SOUTHDOWN and BENSON.] Hush!

*South.* There, Benson! you thought "crocodile" too strong an expression for such a woman—what do you think now?

*Ben.* [L. C. aside] It's a desperate move of hers, but we must back her up—anything to save her from his fury [To SOUTHDOWN.] Well, Trotter, what Mrs. Southdown has told you, is the truth.

*South.* The truth!

[MRS. BENSON and MRS. SOUTHDOWN look astonished—BENSON makes signs to them.]

*Ben.* (L. C.) Yes, Mrs. Benson has confessed all to me. It was an act of indiscretion—she has suffered deeply for her folly.

*South.* [R. C. looking at Mrs. B. who is agitated, L. H.] Is it possible? Well, I declare—I see she is agitated!

*Mrs. S.* [R. aside to TROTTER.] Will you hold your tongue?

*South.* Don't speak to me, hyæna! [To BENSON.] But you believe this?

*Ben.* Of course I do. What can you expect; I neglected her for my briefs as you did for your turnips. Meredith was all attention, all politeness; in short, it was as much my fault as hers—I admit it. She has told me all, and we've made it up again—haven't we my darling?

*Mrs. B.* (L.) Oh, my dear—

*Ben.* [Aside.] Forgive my involving you—but it's to save your friend.

*Enter MEREDITH, L. C.*

Here he is Will an avowal from his own lips satisfy you?

[To SOUTHDOWN]

*Mer.* (C.) Tired of waiting in chambers, Sir, I am come to know—

*Ben.* Sir, circumstances have changed since you were last here

[*Significantly.*] My wife, Sir, has acknowledged to having written **you** a letter—I say, Sir, my wife—

*Mer.* [*Aside.*] She must have confessed. Well, Sir—

*Ben.* You confirm my wife's acknowledgment—

*Mer.* As she has admitted the fact, Sir, I have no choice—

*Ben.* [*Aside.*] He understands exactly! I must insist, Sir, on **your** giving me back the letter—my wife's letter!

*Mer.* [*Aside.*] Give it to **him** Mr Benson, it is impossible!

*Ben.* I insist on having it! [*Aside.*] or Southdown may catch sight of the writing. Come, Sir—the letter!

*Mer.* I've burnt it.

*Mrs. S.* [*Aside to MEREDITH.*] A capital thought.

*Ben.* [*Aside.*] Deucedly well imagined!

MEREDITH slides the letter into MRS. SOUTHDOWN'S hand. MRS. SOUTHDOWN approaches the fire-place.

*South.* [*Up stage. R. H.*] I saw him pass it to my wife. [*Aside.*

*Ben.* Well, as it's burnt, of course you can't return it—so let's say no more about the matter. I forgive you—[*Aside to MEREDITH.*] Shake hands—shake hands!

*Mer.* [*Shaking hands with BENSON.*] With all my heart! [*Goes up o—aside.*] Hang me, if I understand it! [*Exit MEREDITH, L. C.*

SOUTHDOWN crosses to fire-place.

*Ben.* [*crosses to R.*] [*to SOUTHDOWN.*] There. Trotter! are you convinced now?

*South.* (L.) I'll soon show you. Mrs. Southdown!—Madam!—have the kindness to give me that letter!

*Mrs. S.* (L. c.) What letter?

*Ben.* (R.) Didn't you hear Meredith say he had put it in the fire?

*South.* Humbug! The letter, Madam! I command you, by all the majesty of an offended husband! [*Mrs. SOUTHDOWN passes the letter to Mrs. BENSON.*] There, now! she's given the letter to your wife!

*Mrs. B.* No, no!

MRS. B. trying to conceal the letter, drops it. BENSON seizes it.

*South.* Ah! now you've got it!

*Ben.* I!—what an idea!

*South.* [*Goes round behind him, and seizes his hand, with the letter in it, R.*] There!

*Ben.* (R. c.) Well. I have got it!—what then?

*South.* (R.) Let me read it—I insist on reading—it's my right!

[*Trying to take the letter from BENSON'S grasp.*

*Ben.* What right can you have to read a letter written by my wife! am the only person who has any right to violate her secrets.

[*Takes letter, as if going to open it*

*Mrs. B.* [*L. c. grasping BENSON'S arm.*] Oh, Mr. Benson!

*Ben.* [*To her.*] Capital! Appear terrified! [*Aloud.*] No, Mrs. Benson, don't be alarmed—when Benson forgives, he forgives entirely



My generosity doesn't stop half way. [BENSON crosses to the fire-place lights the letter and lets it fall, burning, into the fender.] There!

[Crosses back again to R. C.]

Mrs. B. (L. C.) Oh, Sir! [As BENSON crosses.]

Mrs. S. [Aside L.] She's saved!

South. [Has quickly passed behind, to fire-place, snatched up the burning letter, throws it down L. H. and stamps on it.] Ah! we'll see!

Ben. [Putting Mrs. B. round to R.] There's an example for you, Trotter—I have forgiven my wife, though she had committed an indiscretion. Forgive yours—who hasn't. Come!

Mrs. S. 'L. C.' Ah! there are two words to that. Suppose I refuse to forgive him!

Ben. Oh, but he shall ask your pardon on his knees. [Crosses to L. C.] Come, Trotter, down on your marrowbones! [He forces TROTTER on to his knees.] [To Mrs. S.] Behold him at your feet!

[Crosses behind to R. C.]

South. [On his knees.] If I could only find out the truth! [Picks up remnant of letter and looks at it.] Oh! there's some of the writing still legible! Oh! oh, my wig!

Ben. (R. C.) What's the matter?

South. (L.) A sudden emotion! [Aside.] It's Mrs. Benson's hand after all! [To Mrs. S.] Then, it was—

Mrs. S. (L. C.) Yes.

South. Oh!

Ben. (R. C.) Come, forget and forgive—follow our example—make it up. [Kisses Mrs. BENSON.] Poor deluded Southdown!

South. With pleasure—with a very great deal of pleasure. Toody! [Kisses Mrs. S., then rises from his knees.] Poor innocent Benson!

Ben. And now we've happily made up our quarrel. Oblige me—

[To Mrs. SOUTHDOWN]

South. (L.) Oblige Benson—

Benson. (R. C.) With a moral?

Mrs. SOUTHDOWN. [Advancing a little, L. C.]

Oh, wives! mind, billet-doux are dangerous things;  
Use Hymen's torch to burn off Cupid's wings.  
Husbands! if notes meant for your wives are sent you,  
Don't read, or the contents may discontent you.  
Youths! who post loves in gloves, care it demands,  
That loves and gloves shall both reach the right hands;  
Or you may find—'tis no uncommon case—  
The gloves misfits, and the loves out of place!

Benson. (R. C.) Well summed up

Mrs. BENSON. [R., pointing to audience.]

To sum up the judges' task.

BENSON. [To SOUTHDOWN.]

You'll oblige me—their verdict if you'll ask.

SOUTHDOWN. [L., MRS. S.  
**Toody!**—our fate pray take the House's sense on.

MRS. SOUTHHOWN. [*To audience.*  
**You'll oblige, Trotter—**

SOUTHDOWN  
 By obliging Benson!

L. E

**MRS B , BENSON, MRS. SOUTH., SOUTA.,**

A. S

C U R T A I N .

## ON THE HIRING LINE

Comedy in 3 acts, by Harvey O'Higgins and Harriet Ford. 5 males, 4 females. Interior throughout. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Sherman Fessenden, unable to induce servants to remain for any reasonable length of time at his home, hits upon the novel expedient of engaging detectives to serve as domestics.

His second wife, an actress, weary of the country and longing for Broadway, has succeeded in discouraging every other cook and butler against remaining long at the house, believing that by so doing she will win her husband to her theory that country life is dead. So she is deeply disappointed when she finds she cannot discourage the new servants.

The sleuths, believing they had been called to report on the actions of those living with the Fessendens, proceeded to warn Mr. Fessenden that his wife has been receiving love-notes from Steve Mark, an actor friend, and that his daughter has been planning to elope with a thief.

One sleuth causes an uproar in the house, making a mess of the situations he has witnessed. Mr. Fessenden, however, has learned a lesson and is quite willing to leave the servant problem to his wife thereafter. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

## A FULL HOUSE

A farcical comedy in 3 acts. By Fred Jackson. 7 males, 7 females. One interior scene. Modern costumes. Time, 2½ hours.

Imagine a reckless and wealthy youth who writes ardent love letters to a designing chorus girl, an attorney brother-in-law who steals the letters and then gets his hand-bag mixed up with the grip of a burglar who has just stolen a valuable necklace from the mother of the indiscreet youth, and the efforts of the crook to recover his plunder, as incidents in the story of a play in which the swiftness of the action never halts for an instant. Not only are the situations screamingly funny but the lines themselves hold a fund of humor at all times. This newest and cleverest of all farces was written by Fred Jackson, the well-known short-story writer, and is backed up by the prestige of an impressive New York success and the promise of unlimited fun presented in the most attractive form. A cleaner, cleverer farce has not been seen for many a long day. "A Full House" is a house full of laughs. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

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# POLLYANNA

"The glad play," in 3 acts. By Catherine Chisholm Cushing. Based on the novel by Eleanor H. Porter. 5 males, 6 females. 2 interiors. Costumes, modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

The story has to do with the experiences of an orphan girl who is thrust, unwelcome, into the home of a maiden aunt. In spite of the tribulations that beset her life she manages to find something to be glad about, and brings light into sunless lives. Finally, Pollyanna straightens out the love affairs of her elders, and last, but not least, finds happiness for herself in the heart of Jimmy. "Pollyanna" is a glad play and one which is bound to give one a better appreciation of people and the world. It reflects the humor, tenderness and humanity that gave the story such wonderful popularity among young and old.

Produced at the Hudson Theatre, New York, and for two seasons on tour, by George C. Tyler, with Helen Hayes in the part of "Pollyanna." (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

# THE CHARM SCHOOL

A comedy in 3 acts. By Alice Duer Miller and Robert Milton. 6 males, 10 females (may be played by 5 males and 8 females). Any number of school girls may be used in the ensembles. Scenes, 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays 2½ hours.

The story of "The Charm School" is familiar to Mrs. Miller's readers. It relates the adventures of a handsome young automobile salesman, scarcely out of his 'teens, who, upon inheriting a girls' boarding-school from a maiden aunt, insists on running it himself, according to his own ideas, chief of which is, by the way, that the dominant feature in the education of the young girls of to-day should be CHARM. The situations that arise are teeming with humor—clean, wholesome humor. In the end the young man gives up the school, and promises to wait until the most precocious of his pupils reaches a marriageable age. The play has the freshness of youth, the inspiration of an extravagant but novel idea, the charm of originality, and the promise of wholesome, sanely amusing, pleasant entertainment. We strongly recommend it for high school production. It was first produced at the Bijou Theatre, New York, then toured the country. Two companies are now playing it in England. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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## DADDY LONG-LEGS

A charming comedy in 4 acts. By Jean Webster. The full cast calls for 6 males, 7 females and 6 orphans, but the play, by the easy doubling of some of the characters, may be played by 4 males, 4 females and 3 orphans. The orphans appear only in the first act and may be played by small girls of any age. Four easy interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Many readers of current fiction will recall Jean Webster's "Daddy Long-Legs." Miss Webster dramatized her story and it was presented at the Gaiety Theatre in New York, under Henry Miller's direction, with Ruth Chatterton in the principal rôle. "Daddy Long-Legs" tells the story of Judy, a pretty little drudge in a bleak New England orphanage. One day, a visiting trustee becomes interested in Judy and decides to give her a chance. She does not know the name of her benefactor, but simply calls him Daddy Long-Legs, and writes him letters brimming over with fun and affection. From the Foundling's Home she goes to a fashionable college for girls and there develops the romance that constitutes much of the play's charm. The New York *Times* reviewer, on the morning after the Broadway production, wrote the following: "If you will take your pencil and write down, one below the other, the words delightful, charming, sweet, beautiful and entertaining, and then draw a line and add them up, the answer will be 'Daddy Long-Legs.' To that result you might even add brilliant, pathetic and humorous, but the answer even then would be just what it was before—the play which Miss Jean Webster has made from her book, 'Daddy Long-Legs,' and which was presented at the Gaiety last night. To attempt to describe the simplicity and beauty of 'Daddy Long-Legs' would be like attempting to describe the first breath of Spring after an exceedingly tiresome and hard Winter." "Daddy Long-Legs" enjoyed a two-years' run in New York, and was then toured for over three years. It is now published in play form for the first time. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## THE FAMOUS MRS. FAIR

A comedy in 4 acts. By James Forbes. 3 males, 10 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays a full evening.

An absorbing play of modern American family life. "The Famous Mrs. Fair" is concerned with a strenuous lady who returns from overseas to lecture, and consequently neglects her daughter, who is just saved in time from disaster. Acted with great success by Blanche Bates and Henry Miller. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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## KICK IN

Play in 4 acts. By Willard Mack. 7 males, 5 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays 2½ hours.

"Kick In" is the latest of the very few available mystery plays. Like "Within the Law," "Seven Keys to Baldpate," "The Thirteenth Chair," and "In the Next Room," it is one of those thrillers which are accurately described as "not having a dull moment in it from beginning to end." It is a play with all the ingredients of popularity, not at all difficult to set or to act; the plot carries it along, and the situations are built with that skill and knowledge of the theatre for which Willard Mack is known. An ideal mystery melodrama, for high schools and colleges. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## TILLY OF BLOOMSBURY

("Happy-Go-Lucky.") A comedy in 3 acts. By Ian Hay. 9 males, 7 females. 2 interior scenes. Modern dress. Plays a full evening.

Into an aristocratic family comes Tilly, lovable and youthful, with ideas and manners which greatly upset the circle. Tilly is so frankly honest that she makes no secret of her tremendous affection for the young son of the family; this brings her into many difficulties. But her troubles have a joyous end in charmingly blended scenes of sentiment and humor. This comedy presents an opportunity for fine acting, handsome stage settings, and beautiful costuming. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

## BILLY

Farce-comedy in 3 acts. By George Cameron. 10 males, 5 females. (A few minor male parts can be doubled, making the cast 7 males, 5 females.) 1 exterior. Costumes, modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

The action of the play takes place on the S. S. "Florida," bound for Havana. The story has to do with the disappearance of a set of false teeth, which creates endless complications among passengers and crew, and furnishes two and a quarter hours of the heartiest laughter. One of the funniest comedies produced in the last dozen years on the American stage is "Billy" (sometimes called "Billy's Tombstones"), in which the late Sidney Drew achieved a hit in New York and later toured the country several times. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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## NOT SO LONG AGO

Comedy in a Prologue, 3 acts, and Epilogue. By **Arthur Richman**. 5 males, 7 females. 2 interiors, 1 exterior. Costumes, 1876. Plays a full evening.

Arthur Richman has constructed his play around the Cinderella legend. The playwright has shown great wisdom in his choice of material, for he has cleverly crossed the Cinderella theme with a strain of Romeo and Juliet. Mr. Richman places his young lovers in the picturesque New York of forty years ago. This time Cinderella is a seamstress in the home of a social climber, who may have been the first of her kind, though we doubt it. She is interested sentimentally in the son of this house. Her father, learning of her infatuation for the young man without learning also that it is imaginary on the young girl's part, starts out to discover his intentions. He is a poor inventor. The mother of the youth, ambitious chiefly for her children, shudders at the thought of marriage for her son with a sewing-girl. But the Prince contrives to put the slipper on the right foot, and the end is happiness. The play is quaint and agreeable and the three acts are rich in the charm of love and youth. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## THE LOTTERY MAN

Comedy in 3 acts, by **Rida Johnson Young**. 4 males, 6 females. 3 easy interiors. Costumes, modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

In "The Lottery Man" Rida Johnson Young has seized upon a custom of some newspapers to increase their circulation by clever schemes. Mrs. Young has made the central figure in her famous comedy a newspaper reporter, Jack Wright. Wright owes his employer money, and he agrees to turn in one of the most sensational scoops the paper has ever known. His idea is to conduct a lottery, with *himself* as the prize. The lottery is announced. Thousands of old maids buy coupons. Meantime Wright falls in love with a charming girl. Naturally he fears that he may be won by someone else and starts to get as many tickets as his limited means will permit. Finally the last day is announced. The winning number is 1323, and is held by Lizzie, an old maid, in the household of the newspaper owner. Lizzie refuses to give up. It is discovered, however, that she has stolen the ticket. With this clue, the reporter threatens her with arrest. Of course the coupon is surrendered and Wright gets the girl of his choice. Produced at the Bijou Theater, New York, with great success. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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## MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH

Dramatization in 3 acts, by Anne Crawford Flexner from the novel by Alice Hegan Rice. 15 males, 11 females. 1 interior, 1 exterior. Costumes modern and rustic. Plays a full evening.

A capital dramatization of the ever-beloved Mrs. Wiggs and her friends, people who have entered the hearts and minds of a nation. Mrs. Schultz and Lovey Mary, the pessimistic Miss Hazy and the others need no new introduction. Here is characterization, humor, pathos, and what is best and most appealing in modern American life. The amateur acting rights are reserved for the present in all cities and towns where there are stock companies. Royalty will be quoted on application for those cities and towns where it may be presented by amateurs.

Price, 75 Cents.

## THE FOUR-FLUSHER

Comedy in 3 acts. By Cæsar Dunn. 8 males, 5 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays  $2\frac{1}{4}$  hours.

A comedy of hustling American youth, "The Four-Flusher" is one of those clean and bright plays which reveal the most appealing characteristics of our native types. Here is an amusing story of a young shoe clerk who through cleverness, personality, and plenty of wholesome faith in himself, becomes a millionaire. The play is best described as "breezy." It is full of human touches, and develops a most interesting story. It may be wholeheartedly recommended to high schools. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

## PALS FIRST

Comedy in a prologue and 3 acts. By Lee Wilson Dodd. 8 males, 3 females. 1 interior, 1 exterior. Modern costumes. Plays  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

Based on the successful novel of the same name by F. P. Elliott, "Pals First" is a decidedly picturesque mystery play. Danny and the Dominie, a pair of tramps, enter a mansion and persuade the servants and friends that they belong there. They are not altogether wrong, though it requires the intervention of a judge, two detectives, a villain and an attractive girl to untangle the complications. A most ingenious play, well adapted to performance by high schools and colleges. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

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# NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Comedy in 3 acts. By James Montgomery. 5 males, 6 females. Modern costumes. 2 interiors. Plays  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

Is it possible to tell the absolute truth—even for twenty-four hours? It is—at least Bob Bennett, the hero of "Nothing but the Truth," accomplished the feat. The bet he made with his partners, his friends, and his fiancée—these are the incidents in William Collier's tremendous comedy hit. "Nothing but the Truth" can be whole-heartedly recommended as one of the most sprightly, amusing and popular comedies of which this country can boast. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## SEVENTEEN

A comedy of youth, in 4 acts. By Booth Tarkington. 8 males, 6 females. 1 exterior, 2 interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

It is the tragedy of William Sylvanus Baxter that he has ceased to be sixteen and is not yet eighteen. Baby, child, boy, youth and grown-up are definite phenomena. The world knows them and has learned to put up with them. Seventeen is not an age, it is a disease. In its turbulent bosom the leavings of a boy are at war with the beginnings of a man.

In his heart, William Sylvanus Baxter knows all the tortures and delights of love; he is capable of any of the heroisms of his heroic sex. But he is still sent on the most humiliating errands by his mother, and depends upon his father for the last rickel of spending money.

Silly Bill fell in love with Lolo, the Baby-Talk Lady, a vapid if amiable little flirt. To woo her in a manner worthy of himself (and incidentally of her) he stole his father's evening clothes. When his wooings became a nuisance to the neighborhood, his mother stole the clothes back, and had them altered to fit the middle-aged form of her husband, thereby keeping William at home in the evening.

But when it came to the Baby-Talk Lady's good-bye dance, not to be present was unendurable. How William Sylvanus again got the dress suit, and how as he was wearing it at the party the negro servant, Genesis, disclosed the fact that the proud garment was in reality his father's, are some of the elements in this charming comedy of youth.

"Seventeen" is a story of youth, love and summer time. It is a work of exquisite human sympathy and delicious humor. Produced by Stuart Walker at the Booth Theatre, New York, it enjoyed a run of four years in New York and on the road. Strongly recommended for High School production. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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*French 7/8/38*  
*Miller*

## COME OUT OF THE KITCHEN

A charming comedy in 3 acts. Adapted by A. E. Thomas from the story of the same name by Alice Duer Miller. 6 males, 5 females. 3 interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

The story of "Come Out of the Kitchen" is written around a Virginia family of the old aristocracy, by the name of Daingerfield, who, finding themselves temporarily embarrassed, decide to rent their magnificent home to a rich Yankee. One of the conditions of the lease by the well-to-do New Englander stipulates that a competent staff of white servants should be engaged for his sojourn at the stately home. This servant question presents practically insurmountable difficulties, and one of the daughters of the family conceives the mad-cap idea that she, her sister and their two brothers shall act as the domestic staff for the wealthy Yankee. Olivia Daingerfield, who is the ringleader in the merry scheme, adopts the cognomen of Jane Allen, and elects to preside over the destinies of the kitchen. Her sister, Elizabeth, is appointed housemaid. Her elder brother, Paul, is the butler, and Charley, the youngest of the group, is appointed to the position of bootboy. When Burton Crane arrives from the North, accompanied by Mrs. Faulkner, her daughter, and Crane's attorney, Tucker, they find the staff of servants to possess so many methods of behavior out of the ordinary that amusing complications begin to arise immediately. Olivia's charm and beauty impress Crane above everything else, and the merry story continues through a maze of delightful incidents until the real identity of the heroine is finally disclosed. But not until Crane has professed his love for his charming cook, and the play ends with the brightest prospects of happiness for these two young people. "Come Out of the Kitchen," with Ruth Chatterton in the leading rôle, made a notable success on its production by Henry Miller at the Cohan Theatre New York. It was also a great success at the Strand Theatre, London. A most ingenious and entertaining comedy, and we strongly recommend it for amateur production. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## GOING SOME

Play in 4 acts. By Paul Armstrong and Rex Beach. 12 males, 4 females. 2 exteriors, 1 interior. Costumes, modern and cowboy. Plays a full evening.

Described by the authors as the "chronicle of a certain lot of college men and girls, with a tragic strain of phonograph and cowboys." A rollicking good story, full of action, atmosphere, comedy and drama, redolent of the adventurous spirit of youth. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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